

ANXIETY & FEAR: HOW CAN THEY BE ALLEVIATED FOR BOUNDLESS HAPPINESS?

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INTRODUCTION

Everything we do in life is aimed at achieving happiness. Paradoxically, when attempts are made to achieve happiness, they end up in anxiety and fear subsequent to the attained fleeting happiness. Anxiety is defined in Psychology as an emotion characterized by apprehension or trepidation on an uncertain potential outcome. Apprehension gets triggered by perception of a threat, which can get manifested at physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels. Very seldom one would comprehend that all such actions to preserve happiness is taxing (*dukkha*). This leads to the understanding that fleeting happiness leads to anxiety and fear demanding specific actions and behaviors (*pala*). However, according to Buddha *dāsanā* anxiety and fear manifest as afflictions (*pala*) due to underlying causes (*baṭṭhā*). The causes are inherent mental properties (*bava*) that find their way into life (*bava pachchayā jāthi*) as a continuum of conditioned mental states (*jāthi* – a new birth with *viñāna* energy) since time immemorial (*samsāra*). Thus, afflictions (*dukkha*) constitute an effect rather than a cause. This clearly shows that modern scientific studies on the mind and the Buddha *dāsanā*, which entails a penetrative analysis of the mind, differ to a great extent in their discourses on the root causes of anxiety and fear (*dukkha*). Therefore, the approaches undertaken by modern medical sciences and the Buddha *dāsanā* to resolve these flaws appear distinctly different. The modern medical-psychological approach is merely a treatment for symptoms to manage anxiety and fear, whereas the Buddha *dāsanā* provides a treatment/pathway to heal forever by altering viz alleviating the root causes of afflictions (*dukkha*). Thus, this paper is aimed at shedding light on the two perspectives and providing details of a treatment approach offered in the Buddha *dāsanā* that can help resolve not only psychiatric and general mental health conditions but also all afflictions (*sabba rogo vinassathā*) known to mankind.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

There are genetic, psychodynamic, and neurobiological theories that explain anxiety and fear. Genetic theories focus on vulnerabilities in childhood maltreatments, environmental stressors and dysregulation of neurotransmitters causing increased sensitivity in terms of anxiety and fear including underpinning fear and fear conditioning (Cassidy et.al., 2009). It is assumed that fear and anxiety are distinct but related emotions that function to signal danger, threat, or motivational conflict and to trigger appropriate adaptive responses (Steimer, 2002). Accordingly, fear is considered as a primitive alarm in response to present danger, whereas anxiety is a future oriented state (Barlow, 2002). Worry is considered a symptom of anxiety and fear. Specific anxiety disorders such as panic disorder, obsessions and compulsions differ from one another according to their key features. (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 2013). From an evolutionary perspective, an emotion is a transient response generated as an arousal reaction characterized by feelings and behavior. At low to moderate intensities, acute anxiety is considered an adaptive response to a perceived threat while motivating one to act. When this anxiety is chronic and extreme, it is considered an illness that impacts the functioning of daily life.

A normal response to anxiety is comprised of three parts according to psychiatric literature. They are physiological arousal, cognitive processing, and coping. Physiological arousing means the individual is facing a threat. This increased attention to a stimulus sends a myriad of impulses to the brain. Cognitive processing in the brain means deciphering information from various inputs and yield judgements about the extent of the response to approach the danger or to avoid it. In resolving this threat, signals or commands are being sent either to “fight or flight” (Selye, 1956) or “tend and befriend” behaviors (Taylor, 2006).

Though anxiety may exist as a primary malady, often it is diagnosed with one or more co-morbid conditions either concomitantly or within a lifetime (Merikangas et, al., 2010). Anxiety as a disorder is diagnosed with many labels such as generalized anxiety disorder, chronic anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, social phobias, and panic disorder.

PSYCHODYNAMIC – PSYCHOANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

Psychodynamic theories explore the mental influence on behavior, feelings and emotions and their relationships to early life experiences. They focus also on how loss and separation have contributed to the development of anxiety. These theories suggest that troubled child -parent relationships often cause fearfulness that later lead to conflicts about dependence and independence, self-doubt, confusion with self-identity, personal control, low self-esteem, powerlessness and helplessness causing the child to feel extremely vulnerable to the stressors in life. Such negative feelings and anxiety culminate and lead to panic. Freudian psychoanalysis views anxiety through the structural hypothesis of id-ego-superego where id relates to primary urges and superego relates to inhibition of all actions and reactions based on social and ethical norms. Ego is reality based and exercises its control over id and superego as a means to secure one's survival. Often, anxieties, fears and unusual or extreme behaviors of individuals are attributed to the unconscious mind which is beneath the awareness. Thus, in the psychoanalytic theory of personality, the unconscious mind is considered as a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that remain outside of conscious awareness. The unconscious content that emanates from this reservoir is characterized as unpleasant feelings of pain, anxiety, or conflict which according to Freud influence one's behavior and experience even though one is unaware of these underpinnings. In psychoanalytical terms all basic instincts such as life and death instincts and urges are rooted in the unconscious mind. The life

instincts, sometimes known as the sexual instincts, are those that are related to survival. The death instincts could be, for example, thoughts of aggression, trauma, and danger (Cherry, 2020). If the urges are unacceptable or irrational, they will be kept out of awareness and it is said that such urges are prevented from being elevated to the awareness.

NEUROBIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The human nervous system is comprised of Central Nervous System (CNS) and Autonomic Nervous System (ANS), which is also known as Peripheral Nervous System (PNS). PNS/ANS is subdivided into Sympathetic and Parasympathetic divisions. The Sympathetic system is responsible for arousal and stimulation for the normal running of all innate biological systems including pushing them to overdrive when necessary (commonly known as adrenaline rush) whereas the parasympathetic system is responsible for calming down or soothing effects and feeling of pleasure in both mind and body (Rubin, 2018). A hormone complex of endorphins is released from the pituitary gland in response to pain and can act on the entire nervous system. For smooth healthy functioning, the body uses integumentary, muscular, skeletal, nervous, circulatory, lymphatic, respiratory, endocrine, urinary/excretory, reproductive, and digestive systems in an effort to maintain a relatively stable internal equilibrium known as homeostasis. This is a necessary condition to sustain survival (Modell et.al., 2015). However, anxiety and fear coerce homeostasis into a disequilibrium.

The eleven systems of the human body in turn attempt to re-establish equilibrium through a systemic coordinated approach between them via a sophisticated information system based on hormones secreted into the blood stream and complex chemicals transmitted through dendrons and nerve fibers.

From a neurobiological perspective some assert that intense anxiety (disorders)

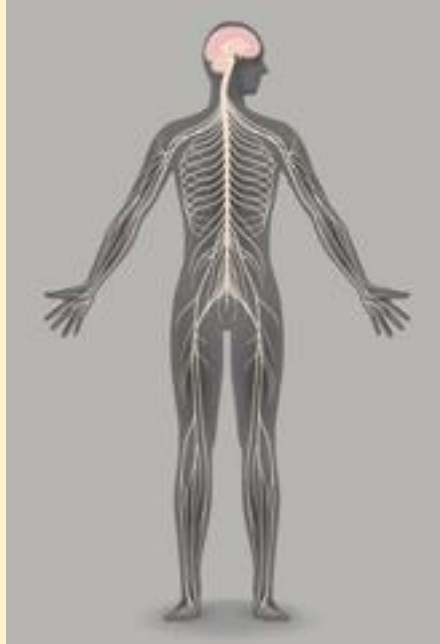


Figure 1: Central and Autonomic Nervous Systems layout.
 Picture courtesy: <https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=>

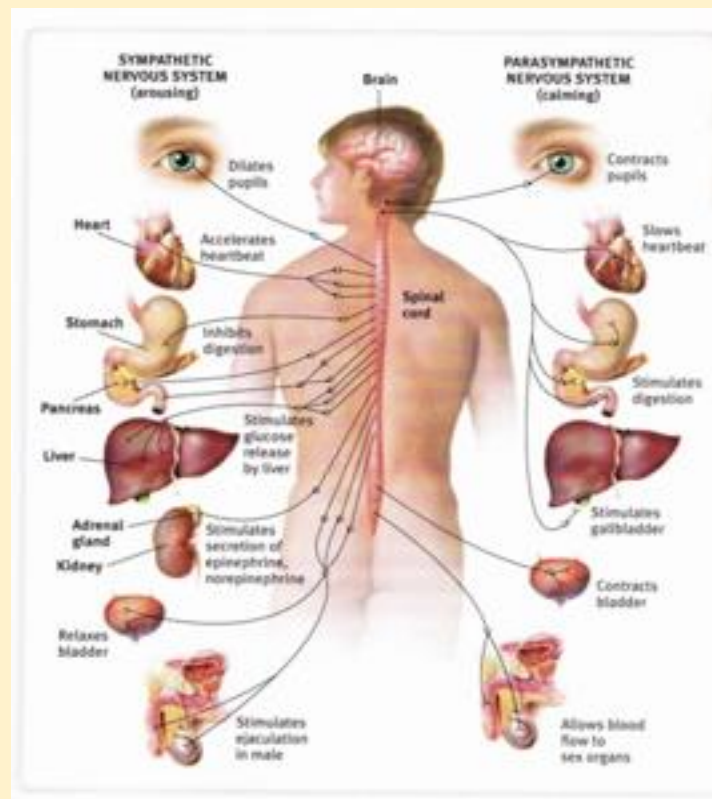


Figure 2: Sympathetic and parasympathetic nerve relationships in response regulation and homeostasis. Picture courtesy: <https://www.anatomylibrary99.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/autonomic-nervous-system-diagram-566e458e682ef.png>

is an exaggeration of the normal response to fear. Accordingly, the emotions of fear and anxiety fade away by repeated exposure to the causative stimulus. However, in the face of a similar threat, the fear response will resurface from the memory. Another factor for anxiety according to psychobiology is neurotransmitters that communicate messages for systemic coordination toward securing life's survival. The major brain structures that appear to involve with fear conditioning are hippocampus and amygdala. Memory is acquired and stored in hippocampus aided by the neurotransmitter glutamate along with gene expression and protein synthesis through the process of synaptic penetration. Amygdala is thought to be crucial to the encoding and storage of memories related to fear (BC Campus, 2013). Physical presentation of anxiety is observed through the changes in cardiovascular, respiratory, and gastrointestinal systems. They are stimulated by the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system through the involvement of the neurotransmitter/hormone norepinephrine (adrenaline). Locus coeruleus of the brain which regulates sleep and alertness also contains the neurons for norepinephrine. Another anxiety related neurotransmitter is gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) which is inhibitory in nature but abundantly available in the brain. GABA neurons are responsible for the firing rate of neurons throughout the brain. Enhanced GABA neurotransmission levels in the brain appear to have some anxiety reducing effect.

Corticotropin releasing hormone (CHR) is a neuropeptide found abundantly in several brain areas. It gets released from the hypothalamus toward activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA) promoting the production of cortisol (Justice et.al., 2015). Activation of the HPA is caused by many stimuli such as a perceived threat, an increase in arousal, and attention to environmental cues. Cortisol, a necessary hormone, promotes glucose availability to skeletal

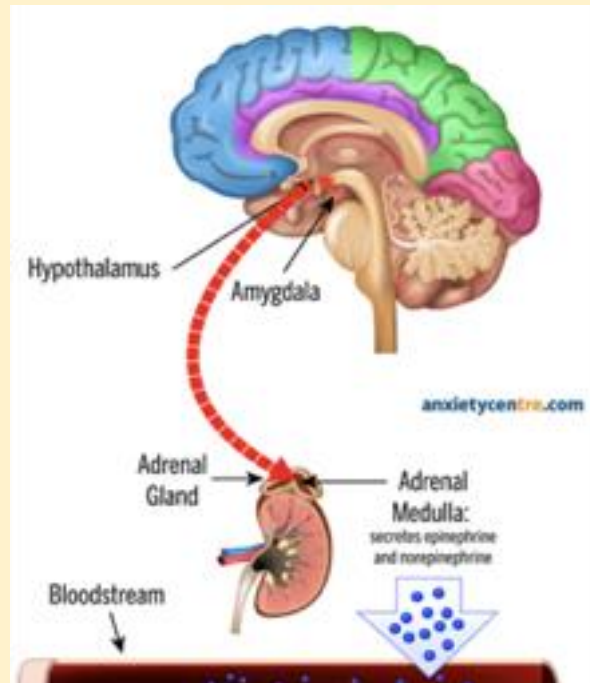


Figure 3: Sympathetic Adrenomedullary system (SAM)
 Picture courtesy: <https://www.anxietycentre.com/anxiety/stress-response.shtml>

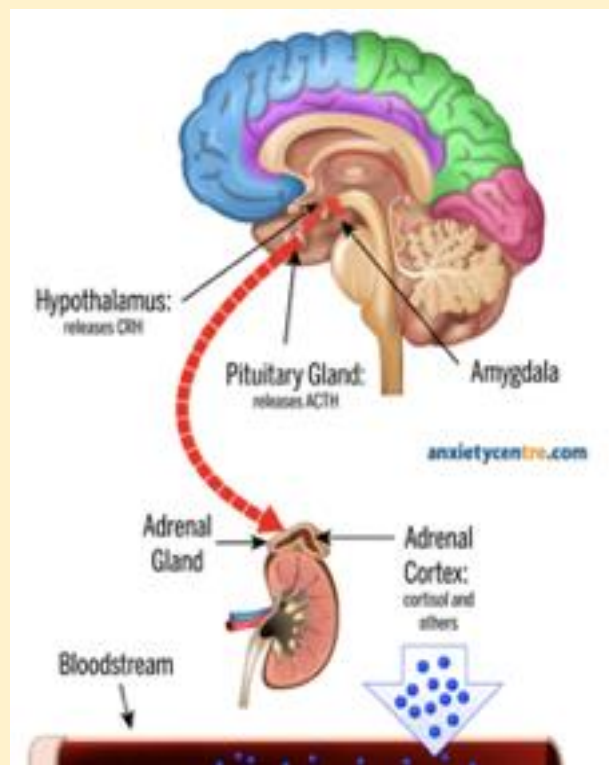


Figure 4: Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis (HPA)
 Picture courtesy: <https://www.anxietycentre.com/anxiety/stress-response.shtml>

muscles to energize fight or flight response, which is a survival mechanism. HPA activates a neurobiological network by releasing factors for hormone production required to trigger responses and reactions throughout the body in preparation for fight or flight response. There are also other neurotransmitters that are associated with anxiety.

Neurotransmitters	
Neurotransmitter Name	Function
Acetylcholine	Movement control, thinking/comprehending
Glutamate	Memory
Gamma-amino butyric acid (GABA)	Eating, sleeping, aggression
Dopamine	Movement control, attention, pleasure and reward feelings
Serotonin	Eating, sleeping, mood, pain, depression, coping with stress
Endorphins	Pain suppression, pleasurable feelings, appetite

Figure 5: Neurotransmitters and their generally known functions

Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/236x/f6/04/8e/f6048cc0473d477c8b640677802797ac.jpg>

In light of the above details, it can be summarized that when faced with a perceived threat to survival/existence, or with an impending danger to life a whole network of psycho-neurobiological reactions get triggered throughout the body activating a systemic endeavor either to suppress or alleviate that danger and secure one's own survival. This systemic activation sounds analogous to the *āyathanika ratāva* explained in much more detail in the Buddha *dāsanā*. Moreover, according to neuroscience literature, the above detailed neurobiological dynamics are understood only partially and need further clarifications as to how they exactly operate with regards to anxiety and related mental afflictions.

This whole body of scientific knowledge that provides the foundation for psycho-biomedical approach is geared to help people manage their afflictions

rather than providing a pathway for complete healing. Moreover, a careful examination using this knowledge on various psychobiological systems sheds light on how the survival mechanisms operate rather than healing from afflictions by alleviating their root causes. The identification of causes whether through psychological, psychoanalytical, or psycho-biomedical perspectives on afflictions, are sometimes limited to assumed physical evidence based on specific or general symptoms both subjective and objective. Therefore, it can be said that the true underlying root causes for most mental afflictions remain unknown at best. The modern psychology however, attributes almost all unusual behaviors or abnormal behaviors to the unconscious mind because it is believed that it acts as a repository, or a ‘cauldron’ of primitive wishes and impulses that must be kept from awareness (McLeod, 2015). Psychoanalysis argues that the influences of the unconscious mind on individual behavior can be revealed through free association (slips of the tongue) and through dream interpretation.

PERSPECTIVE OF PRISTINELY PURE BUDDHA DHAMMA

Twenty-six hundred years ago, the Buddha explored the true reality of human nature and its survival (*kin saṁva gawāsie and kin kūsala gawāsie*) with great indelible detail and was able to comprehend the complex nature of body -mind dynamics through own knowledge without any external help (*swayanbū gñāna*) by mentally fragmenting (*baghavattho*) them into components as causes and effects (*bathū – pala*) for the purpose of not only experientially comprehending (*passatho*) human reality but also to be able to explain this newly discovered “never before heard” (*pūbbā ananūssūthāsū dhammasū*) *dhamma* or principle knowledge (*jānatho*) to the mankind. In Magadhi Buddha language, the body-mind complex is known as *pañchaskandha* or *nāma-rūpa*. *Nāma* is comprised of mental components whereas

rūpa is referred to the physical corporeality in general. At times *rūpa* refers also to mental images depending on the elucidation.

In the Buddha *dhamma* the survival refers to the continuation of existence and it is not restricted to overcoming a threat or incidental dangers. The survival (*pavathma*) discussed in the Buddha *dāsanā* encompasses both richness and afflictions that constitute human reality. The Buddha discovered that there are three cardinal mental undercurrents (flaws) that support continued existence of all beings irrespective of the species. Desirability (*priya-manāpa*) and undesirability (*apriya-amanāpa*) of what one experiences through the six sense organs is fundamental to all beings. Making choices between *priya-manāpa* (*rāga*) and *apriya-amanāpa* (*dvāsha*) using one's desirability and undesirability is known as *moha* or mental darkness. *Priya-manāpa* nature of the mind leads to a firm, false, fixed, attitude which leads to the conditioned innate mental desire (*nichcha*), the anticipation to maintain this innate desire for continued exuberance (*sūkha*) and to the notion of I, me or mine identifying with, taking ownership of or to gaining control over a person, property, event or an idea (*atththa*). These three mental properties *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *atththa* give rise to subtle mental undercurrents of *rāga*, *dvāsha* and *moha* as a result of conditioning during an unfathomably long line of births and deaths in thirty-one planes of existence since time immemorial. These undercurrents make one feel mundane pleasures (*āmisā sūvaya*) whether desirable, undesirable or in taking control of things. All three types of experiences give rise to mundane feelings that one experiences in life which constitutes the notion of egotism I, me, or mine. These three undercurrents *rāga*, *dvāsha* and *moha* form the foundation for all afflictions in all beings. A careful examination of these three undercurrents reveal that the true reality of them are quite intriguing. *Amisa sūvaya* is portrayed in the *dhamma* as *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *atththa*. *Nichcha* is a lasting conditioned flawed attitude for the maintenance of innate mental desire

(*ichcha*) on a mental object to continue without any interruption. This is exciting and anxiety provoking. It makes one feel exuberant (*sūkha*). This too results in anxiety. However, the true reality is that one is unable to maintain what was once considered desirable due to the fact that the mental object changes continuously from moment to moment until it perishes at some point (*sabbæ sankhārā anichchāthi; sabbæ sankhārā dukkhaṭṭhi; sabbæ dhammā anathāthi*).

This inability also leads to anxiety and spreads to many anxious actions to sustain this exuberance. During this process, a struggle takes place in the mind to maintain the level of exuberance (*sūkha*) experienced. This too generates anxiety. Because this struggle to sustain exuberance becomes futile and impossible, the *sūkha* feature turns into its second guise or turns against the original object. This second guise is known in Magadhi as *dvæsha* or repulsion (*dukkha*). Inevitably desire turns into repulsion. This also leads to anxiety. Now, the *sūkha* property has turned into *dukkha*, which is *dvæsha*. *Dvæsha* or repulsion is labelled as mental discord, frustration, depression, labile mood, apathy, conflict, rejection, anguish, anger, hatred, and violence. This is the true reality of what is considered as *sūkha*.

When one comprehends that attempting to identify with, taking ownership of or gaining control over a person, property, event, or an idea based on the notion of I, me or mine is unworthy of pursuing any longer (*anaththa*). It leads to the willing abandonment of the conditioned attitudes of *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *attha* while experientially gaining insight into their true reality, which is *anichcha*, *dukkha* and *anaththa*. This must happen experientially.

A careful examination reveals further that these three properties *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *attha* always generate anxiety and fears through actions to protect *āmisa sūvaya*, irrespective of the nature of the mental object. Thus, these conditioned properties constitute a fundamental flaw in the human psyche. As opposed to these flaws, *anichcha*, *dukkha* and *anaththa* mental properties, when conditioned,

bring boundless contentment (*nirāmisā sūvaya*) and serenity into the mind. Apparently, this re-conditioning occurs in the Central Nervous System which in the Buddha *dasanā* is explained as *yonisomanasikāraya*. With the autonomic nervous system, only the decisions with *ayonisomanasikāraya* such as acting on emotions and conditioned habits needed for survival keep continuing. In psychology/psychiatry, they are interpreted as coping whether adaptive or maladaptive. Only a mind that has comprehended the true nature of this reality becomes a mind capable of *yonisomanasikāraya* or decision on actions both mental and physical by weighing on causes and their effects (*hathū-pala*) on a given situation. Such a mind is known in the *dhamma* as a mind full of *paññā* or a mind that has dismantled the power of *viññāna* and attained *paññā vimūtbhī*.

This above struggle for the maintenance of *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *atththa* in mundane affairs leads to causes and effects that further prolong one's existence in a cycle of endless births and deaths which is known as *samsāra*. Births and deaths, existence/survival full of anxieties and fears motivate one to survive. This condition is viewed as human maladies (*dukkha*) caused by the above stated conditioning. Therefore, the three properties discussed are fundamental to both living and dying according to *dhamma*. Now a question must be asked as to how these conditioned properties get transmitted from one life to another?

At the moment of death, a dominant conditioned property accompanied by accrued seeds of *kamma* (*kālan karoṭhī*) evolves into a stream of active mental energy (*manomaya kāya*) with potential to give rise to *viññāna* energy departs the corporeality (*karajakāya*). This means an active stream of mental energy (*manomaya kāya*: *manomaya* – mental; *kāya* – action/activity) accompanied by a myriad of properties conditioned during this and past lives (*kālan karoṭhī*) find conception in a mother's womb as a new being and get its *viññāna* energy sparked in accordance with the universal laws of nature. Upon birth dominant

conditioned properties get manifested in a variety of shades in various mental environments. According to Buddha *dāsanā*, this is how various conditioned latent mental properties (*gathi*) receive a new lease on life in one's continued existence.

At the time of death, a conditioned property (*gathi*) that surfaces in the mind, which is a stream of active mental energy (*manomaya kāya*) defines the characteristics of the newly born being. The intensity of the conditioned mental properties brought over from past lives (seeds of *kamma*) and the new *viñāna* energy arisen have a considerable impact on the genotypical and phenotypical expression of this new being. This happens according to five different universal phenomena namely the principles of elemental change (*rithū niyāma*), natural seeding (*beeja niyāma*), principles of governing emotions (*citta niyāma*), principle of *kamma* (*kamma niyāma*) and the principles of thoughts and their dynamics (*dhamma niyāma*) according to Buddha *dāsanā*. This is how the phenomenon of causes leading to the phenomenon of effects (*baṭhū-pala dhamma*) runs in nature.

DYNAMICS OF THOUGHTS AND AFFLICTIONS

The Buddha recognized that there are three types of objects (*ārammana*) floating through the mind. They are *avyāgatha*, *sankhāra* and *kriyā ārammana* that lead to the above three types *avyāgatha*, *sankhāra* and *kriyā citta*. *Avyāgatha ārammana* do not get cognized into *viñāna* energy. *Ārammana* associated with *san* (*rāga*, *dvāsha* and *moha*) evolve into *sankhāra* thoughts, which are the causes for afflictions. They constitute only a fraction of the volume compared to *avyāgatha* and *kriyā ārammana*. *Kriyā citta* are based on undefiled mental properties known as *alobha*, *advāsha*, *amoha*, *veetha ragee*, *veetha dvāshee*, *veetha mohee*, *rāgakhāya*, *dvāshakhāya*, and *mohakhāya* and are totally free of *san* properties. Although these applies only to a small fraction of daily volume of incoming *ārammana*, *sankhāra ārammana*

leading to *viñāna* energy evolve into core of afflictions according to Buddha *dāsanā*.

How do these *sankhāra* thoughts get fabricated in the mind? How do they generate a systemic response? In the Buddha *dāsanā rūpa* represents the physical body that houses all six sense organs (*salāyathana*) and their mental spheres including associated systems, respectively (for example, thoughts in association with the brain, the nervous system and tongue, in association with the entire digestive system, or emotions in associations with nervous and circulatory systems etc.). These six sense spheres, their information flow amalgamated with the three basic conditioned properties stated before as *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *atththa* supported by *rāga*, *dvaṣha* and *moha* underpinnings become the cause of afflictions in all beings. This is the process in which a thought object becomes *viñāna* energy in association with *rāga*, *dvaṣha* and *moha*. Any actions both mental and physical if associated with *san* properties, turn into *sankhāra* (*citta*) or emotions that generate *viñāna* energy.

In the *Cháchakka Sutta* (MN 148) the whole process of mind- body dynamics is described in thirty-six cyclical processes (*cháchakka* – *chá+chakka*; *chá* = six; *chakka* = cycles) that support a continuous flow of *san* (*rāga*, *dvaṣha* and *moha* associations or inherited *gathi*), their repeated generation and re-generation in the mind (*citta santhānaya*) and how these cycles ultimately lead to the formation of afflictions within this fathom long body. The activation of these thirty-six cycles are related directly to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Each of these six senses function in multiple ways either as organs or as part of a system or as part of a cyclical processes (*chakka*).

Instead of describing all six sense spheres and their cycles, one sense sphere is discussed for clarity in this paper. This analysis contains how a mental object

leads to the formation of intentional actions (*sankhāra*) with or without awareness further contributing to consequences (*sabbā sankhārā dukkha*) in this life and beyond providing fuel to *viñāna* to continue with its endless *samsāric* drift. This whole process can be explained with the following Buddha utterance in the *Cháchakka Sutta* in Magadhi terminology:

*“Chakkūncha patichcha rūpacha ūppajjathi chakkūviñānan, thinan sangathi passo;
Sampassa ja vadanā,
Vadanā pachchaya tanhā.
Tanhā pachchaya ūpādāna,
Ūpādāna pachchaya bava.
Bava pachchaya jāthi, jara, marana, soka, paridāva, dukkha, domanassa, ūpāyāsā
sambavanthi”.*

The above phrase means the following. When the property of innate mental desire captures a sight (*rūpāyathana*) coming through the action of the eye, there arises *chakkū viñāna kāya* (*chakkūncha patichcha rūpacha ūppajjathi chakkūviñānan*). Similarly, when the property of innate mental desire captures a sound, odor, taste, tacton or thought (*dhammāyathana*) connect with respective sense organs, there arises *chakkū viñāna kāya, sotha viñāna kāya, gandha viñāna kāya, kāya, jivha viñāna kāya, pottabbha kāya* and *mano viñānakāya*. *Kāya* means an action/reaction.

Now, it is important to clarify the Magadhi term *patichcha* frequently applied in the above *sutta*. *Patichcha* means *pati+ichcha*; *pati* – deep/strong; *ichcha* – innate mental desire. It must be stated clearly that the definite reason for the arising of the six dynamic cycles, *chakkū viñānakāya, sotha viñānakāya, ghāna viñānakāya, jivhā viñānakāya, kāya viñānakāya* and *mano viñānakāya* in one’s mind is due to the underpinning of unwavering innate desire (*patichcha*). In other words *patichcha* means integration of innate desire born in the mind with an object. When a sight (*rūpāyathana*) lands in the eye, a desire (*priya-manāpa gathi*) born in the mind to assimilate/integrate(*upādānaya*) what was seen, there evolves *patichcha* to the

object of sight. This is one way of how *patichcha* integrates an object with innate desire arising in the mind.

When a sight (*rūpāyathana*) lands in the eye, if a non-agreeable attitude (*apriya-amanāpa gathi*) is born over what is seen and non-agreeability (*dvæsha* = second guise) gets integrated (*upādāna*), then *patichcha* of none-agreeability evolves in the mind. This constitutes a second mode of how *patichcha* integrates an object with innate *dvæsha* arising in the mind.

When a sight (*rūpāyathana*) lands in the eye, if neither agreeable (*priya-manāpa gathi*) nor non-agreeable (*apriya-amanāpa gathi*) (*adhūkkama-asūkha gathi* = neither agreeable nor non-agreeable) attitude is born over what is seen, integration of *adhūkkama-asūkha gathi* (*upādāna*) triggers *patichcha* to the object of *adhūkkama-asūkha* sight. This constitutes a third way of how *patichcha* integrates an object.

These integrations with *patichcha* are common to all six sense spheres through the three pathways explained above. In this process a flawed comparison (*moha*) with a flawed yard stick (measured through own desirability and undesirability) and a flawed notion of conceit (notion I, me, or mine = *maññathāvaya*) on the object arise in the mind. This comparison using a flawed yard stick becomes a flawed comparison between the feeling of contentment (*sūkha*) and feeling of discontentment (*dukkha*). This yard stick is not universally applicable, but they are personal and subjective in nature and certainly error prone. Such appraisals lead to anxieties and all other existential afflictions. If one considers causes and effects and their consequences through an in-depth comprehension of *anichcha*, *dukkha* and *anaththa* nature of what is being pursued prior to taking any actions mentally or physically with a mind free of *rāga*, *dvæsha* and *moha*, then it could lead to decisions and outcomes that are certainly affliction free and without negative consequences. The result would be lasting contentment or supramundane happiness (*nirāmisa sūvaya*).

“*Chakkūncha patichcha rūpacha uppajjathi chakkūvināna – thinnan sangathi passo*”.

This above Magadhi phrase means the two aspects *chakkūncha* and *rūpacha* get linked by the *citta* through *patichcha* giving rise to *chakkūvināna*. Coming together of these three states will lead to the arising of three *san* properties (*sangathi – san+gathi*; *san – rāga, dvēsha* and *moha* with their associations; *gathi – habits or properties*) due to contact (*passo = contact*; *thinnan sangathi passo*). As a result of the integration of innate mental desire (*patichcha*) with a mental object of sight, a cyclical process gets triggered resulting in a systemic response (*āyathanika ratāva*).

Agreeing to what is desirable (*priya-manāpa*), disagreeing (*gāteema*) with what is undesirable (*apriya-amanāpa*) and going adrift (*mūlāveema*) between the agreeable and the disagreeable, *patichcha* (innate desire) gets integrated with the energy coming from the eye (*salāyathana*) generating an action known as *chakkū vināna kāya* giving rise to a sensation known as *sampasso* (contact based on *san*). *Sampasso* leads to feelings (*sampassa ja vādanā*). Once an awareness (*vādanā*) is felt, it gets appraised by own flawed yard stick tainted by *rāga, dvēsha* and *moha* explained earlier. Thus, depending on the dominant mental property whether it be *rāga, dvēsha* or *moha* that is associated with the object in sight, the mind decides to like it, dislike it, or remain undecided of *vādanā* while going adrift through the comparison. Whether liking, disliking, or remaining undecided on *vādanā* is a way of inclining to the object. This inclination is explained as *vādanā pachchayā tanhā* and *tanhā* means the mind gets clinched to the mental object either as likable or dislikable or pending. Once the object gets ensnared with *tanhā*, one assimilates (*ūpādāna*) it mentally and it leads to the arising of a corrupted mental force known as *vināna* energy. If this action is repeated and the mind becomes conditioned, a habit is formed. It becomes obvious that *vināna* survives by the fuel *rāga, dvēsha* or *moha* that manifest as existential afflictions. This type of

conditioning further give rise to fixed attitudes of *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *attha* explained earlier.

UNDENIABLE DYNAMICS OF SAMŪDAYA

Samūdaya energy is the cardinal cause for the continued existence of *samsāric* drift, the generation and regeneration of current and future afflictions (*dukkha*). *Samūdaya* emerges in a mind as a force generated through cyclical processes via six sense agencies (*salāyathana*). *Samūdaya* means *sambavan* (*sam=san+bava*). This means generation of new relationships or *gathi* associated with *san* (*rāga*, *dvaesha* and *moha*) in the mind securing the existence. In other words, the process of *samūdaya* generates seeds of *kamma* (*kamma beeja* / *ūppaththi beeja* / *viñāna beeja*) which is the root cause for continued existential *samsāric* drift with repeated births. The terms *sambavan* and *samūdaya* denote the manner in which seeds of *kamma* (*kamma beeja*) that cause repeated births, are generated. The above discussion reveals how *patichcha samūppāda dhamma* functions through the roots of ignorance (*avijjāmūla*) in cyclical processes governed by *rāga*, *dvaesha* and *moha*.

(*Patichchasamūppāda* – *pati+ichcha+sam+ūppāda*; *pati* – tight/strong; *ichcha* – innate mental desire; *sam=san* – *rāga*, *dvesha* and *moha* associations; *ūppāda* – generation/birth; *dhamma* – thoughts). In other words it is the phenomenon that generates *san* (*rāga*, *dvaesha* and *moha*) based on *patichcha*.

Once an object is assimilated mentally, it results in the arising of *samūdaya* energy (*samūdaya*; *sam* (*san*)+*ūdaya*; *sam* = *rāga*, *dvaesha* and *moha*; *ūdaya* – born) caused by *patichcha* as the main (*moolika*) reason, as an underlying (*nidāna*) reason and as well as a consequential (*prathya*) reason (*haethūn patichcha sambūthan*). Once *samūdaya* has arisen, it becomes a conditioned *gathi* or a mental property deep rooted in the *manomaya kāya*. Such *samūdaya dhamma* lasts about seven days and fades away (*samūdaya dhammā va vaya dhammā*) if not renewed. All these component actions and reactions within the mind-body system triggered by sense organs and associated systems lead to systemic responses (*āyathanika ratāva*) initiated by the

underlying tendencies of *rāga*, *dvaṣṣa* and *moha* that operate beneath the awareness of an individual. This is an inherent adaptation by the sense organs as part of a system (*āyathanika ratāva*) to support survival. Unless these covert operations get exposed by a mind capable of appraising causes and effects on events and actions, which is referred to as *yonisomanasikaraya*, the mind-body operations continue unrelentingly until death, securing continued survival of the *viññāna* energy. This means *viññāna* must engage with *saṃ* associations or in other words enmesh with afflictions as a necessary condition to secure its fuel for own survival meaning uncountable future lives and death.

NIBBĀNAN PARAMAN SŪKHAN

In order to alleviate afflictions for good, it is important to explore the three fundamental tenets (*trilakkhana* – *anichcha*, *dukkha* and *anaththa*) mentioned earlier briefly. Their true comprehension will lead to a pathway that can alleviate all afflictions related to *samsāric* existence. Here, the duality (*dvathāvaya*) of the innate cyclical processes related to sense organs are analyzed and illustrated as

*chakkūn attha vā chakkūn anaththā vā, rūpan attha vā anaththā vā,
chakkū viññānan attha vā anaththā vā, chakkū sampassa attha vā
anaththā vā, chakkū vādanā attha vā anaththā vā, and chakkū thanhā
attha vā anaththā vā.*

It is important to clarify the term *attha* in the above Buddha utterance. Here, *atththa* means the notion of control permeated through I, me, or mine attitude over worldly things through conceit (*mānaya*). An arousal (*mathveema*) and its formative energy born when the eye notes a sight, begin to exhaust (*vaya dhammā*) toward its inevitable expiration from the moment it evolves. Thus, there is hardly any substance or a value that can be owned or used to exert control over (*atththāthi*) by the *maññathāvaya* (= *ashmimānaya* = conceit) or agreeable in convention by the notion of I, me, or mine. Once this is known through

experience, (*yassa bopana ūppādopi vayoṇi*) one will be able to comprehend this insecurity through *yathā būtha gñāna dassana* attained through *yonisomanasikaraya*. Accordingly, one turns into “*icchassa avmāgathan bothi*”. This means comprehending the true reality free from *patichcha*. By freeing the mind from the two extremes of contentment (*priya*) and discontentment (*apriya*) as well as from desire (*kamaththa*), one is able to comprehend the true nature of emotions (*sankhāra*), and related actions as they are. Such a mind enables the comprehension of “*chakkun anaththā, rūpan anaththā, chakkū viññānan anaththā, chakkū sampassa anaththā, chakkū vādanā anaththā* and *chakkū thanhā anaththā*” which is the realistic true nature of this whole process from stimulation to actions based on compulsions as a systemic response (*āyathanika ratāva*) resulting within the cognitive process. *Aththa* and *anaththa* discussed in the Noble Buddha *dhamma* are only concepts within the discussion of *bathu-pala dhamma* (*dhamma* of cause and effect).

When innate mental desire (*patichcha*) integrates an object seen by the eye, and a feeling (*vādanā*) emerges by seeing the object, inevitably there arises also mental inclination (*thanhā*) toward the object. Determined actions toward the assimilation (*ūpādāna*) of either desirable or undesirable or *moha* related objects represent a remarkably fixed behavior, which characterizes the nature of a person. Such a mind operates on a universal phenomenon characterized in the *dhamma* as the three tenets: *nichcha* (attitude of holding onto to desirable mental objects as one wishes for), *sūkha* (feeling of contentment arising through the aforementioned attitude) and *attha* (attitude to own what is desirable triggered by the underlying notion of I, me or mine). When these three properties *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *attha* come together in any action, one feels a false security and a false fleeting happiness that do not last. Therefore, these mundane feeling of contentment, exuberance, and the notion of “I feel, me feeling or our feeling”

are characterized in the Buddha *dāsanā* as *āmisa sūvaya*. This *āmisa sūvaya* is nothing but the feelings associated with the notion of I, me or mine or egotism (*asbmimānaya*). As long as *nicchā*, *sūkkha* and *aththa* properties (*bava*) actively operate in the mind, all mental actions (*sabbakāya*) are geared toward the upkeep of such contentment (=continuation of infinite *samsāric* existence). These three properties trigger one to chase continuously after mundane contentment or *āmisa sūvaya*. This is a firm, illusory human behavior that is quite analogous to the thirsty deer chasing a mirage in the desert assuming its water. The end results of anxieties and fears always lead to mental discord.

If a mental impression (*rūpa*) is accepted as *aththa* based on *thanhā* as a result of *patichcha*, certainly, there occurred something that leads to helplessness, powerlessness, and insecurity promoting anxieties and fears that are considered afflictions (*dukkha*). If one views this process and the outcome in their worthless, unproductive, ignoble nature, then one has fully comprehended the *anaththa* nature of mental impressions that bombard the mind through six sense spheres. All in all there are thirty-six cyclical process related to existential afflictions that are analyzed in the *Cháchakka Sutta* for their *anaththa* nature. *Anaththa* nature is common to all composite component systemic responses that are felt as real but are truly illusory in nature. The nature of *anaththa dhamma* must be comprehended experientially if one desires to rid the afflictions for good.

Once this *dhamma* reality is comprehended through the wisdom of seeing reality, which is known as *yathā būtha gñāna dassana*, one recognizes (*icchassa avmāgathan bothi*) that the mental desire clinching to an object (*rūpa*) leading to afflictions is an illusion formed in the mind. One who has recognized this illusory defect, follows the path to free the mind fully while comprehending experientially the *anaththa* nature of all *viñāna kāya*.

It follows then that all similar aforementioned cyclical processes are illusions formed in the mind and assimilated (*ūpādāna*) as *nichcha*, *sūkha* and *attha* through the notion of I, me, or mine (*ashmimānaya/maññathāva*). One who has understood this process through *yathā būtha gñana dassana* will not only comprehend its reality but also comprehend how one becomes insecure when objects that are perceived as *nichcha*, *sūkha*, and *attha* are assimilated (*ūpādāna*). Through this *gñana dassana*, one comprehends reality as it is. In this manner, it becomes obvious to one that the impulsive energy generated through the six agencies (*sabbakāya*) related to eye (*chakkē*), ear (*sotha*), nose (*ghāna*), tongue (*jivhā*), body (*kāya*) and mind (*mano*), which until now got recognized as *atththa* through *ashmimānaya* is nothing but *anaththa*, which in reality, is ephemeral (*viparinama*). This ephemeral nature of feelings makes one feels insecure (*anātha*) or powerless or helpless. This process of fabrication of afflictions is known in the Buddha *daśanā* as *saccāya samūdaya gāmini patipadā*. This pathway of *saccāya samūdaya gāmini patipadā* is part of a duality depicted in the Buddha *dhamma*.

The other side of this duality is *saccāya nirodha gāmini patipadā*. When one has comprehended how *saccāya samūdaya* is being generated through the eye, ear, nose tongue, body and mind (via *āyathanika ratāva*), such a person turns into a noble being with not only a realistic comprehension of *dhammo sandittiko* state but also with a realistic in-depth experiential knowledge of the *saccāya samūdaya gāmini patipadā*. This noble being is now convinced that the *saccāya samūdaya gāmini patipadā* not only contributes to the repeated births in perilous infinite *samsāra* but also gives birth to existential afflictions (*dukkha*). Moreover, its comprehended that it is a hostile treacherous path and resolved to end it.

Therefore, such a noble being will tread the path the *saccāya* ceasing (*anūppāda*) *saccāya nirodha gāmini patipadā*. An *ariya srāvaka*, who has comprehended both trajectories thoroughly and experientially (*pasakkota dākeema*), realistically

comprehends the flawless absolute path of *sammā magga*, that leads to the full freedom from existential afflictions (*dukkha*). This transformation is known in the *dhamma* as the attainment of *sammā ditty*. Here, one comprehends penetratively to relinquish *saccāya samūdaya gāmini patipadā* and adopt *saccāya nirodha gāmini patipadā* while transitioning into *sammā ditty*. An *ariya srāvaka* who has the empirical knowledge of *saccāya samūdaya gāmini patipadā* has comprehended empirically two of the *chatū ariya saṁsa* namely *dukkha ariya saṁsa* and *samūdaya gāmini ariya saṁsa*. Similarly, an *ariya srāvaka* who has the empirical knowledge of *saccāya nirodha gāmini patipadā* has comprehended empirically *dukkha nirodha ariya saṁsa* and *dukkha nirodha gāmini patipadan ariya saṁsa* leading to the comprehension of the full scope of *chatū ariya saṁsa*.

This whole process constitutes *āna-pāna sathi samādhi bhāvanā*. All *sankhāra* that generate *san* and *samūdaya* must be dissociated. This means in other words *rāga*, *dvāsha* and *moha* and their associated actions must be dissociated (*pāna*) from the *citta santhānaya* while their opposite properties *veetha rāgee*, *veetha dvāshee* and *veetha mohee* thoughts be associated (*āna*) to dispel *san*. *Niroda* means (*ni+roda*, *ni* – none; *roda* – wheeling thoughts) ending *san* based wheeling thoughts. In other words this is *anūppāda niroda* (ending *san*-based thoughts prior to wheeling toward becoming *anūsaya*). *Anūsaya* means newly formed properties which on recurrence transforms into conditioned old habits (*āsaya*).

Accordingly, *anūsaya* is born in a mind due to wheeling of thoughts based on *rāga*, *dvāsha* and *moha* associated mental objects. As a result of the *patichcha samūppāda dhamma* process running through the agencies of *chakkē*, *sotha*, *ghāna jivhā*, *kāya* and *mano* while operating on the root of ignorance generate underlying new properties that could transform into habits. In a mind that operates on the basis as discussed above, an uninterrupted lineage of causes and effects associated with *avijjā* is triggered. As a result of a mind that is distracted and enveloped by a veil

of ignorance, the path to unfastening from *samsāric* afflictions (*dukkha*) becomes inaccessible. However, the path of *saccāya nirodha gāmini patipadā* must be deliberated and treaded by oneself, comprehending it empirically within oneself while understanding the main (*mūla*), underlying (*nidāna*) and contributory (*prathya*) reasons that repeatedly perpetuate the infinite journey in the perilous *samsāra*.

In this process, one must empirically comprehend the *kūśalamūla patichcha samūppāda dhamma* process that affords *patichcha samūppāda* (*san + ūdaya*) to turn to cessation or *nirodha* of *san* or *rāga*, *dvaesha* and *moha*. This is *āna dhamma* that must be associated. This too is *batthū-pala dhamma* and must be empirically comprehend that all feelings and exuberances (*assādan*) as *anaththa* and are futile. What has been accepted until now as joyful and exuberant are understood practically as illusions (*māyā*) and a cause for insecurities. Once this is understood penetratively and practically, one abandons the causes and finds freedom from such afflictions. This comprehension is applicable to all responses through the six sense spheres.

This penetrative knowledge does not allow the energy emanating from the action of the eye to progress toward the arising of *viñāna* energy through the six steps mentioned earlier. Instead of *viñāna citta*, *kriya citta* or *yathā būtha gñana* (which is *paññā*) begins to operate allowing *veetha rāgee*, *veetha dvaeshee*, *veetha mohee*, *alobha*, *advesha* and *amoha* actions. A mind with *kriya citta* prevents *san* and *samūdaya* from arising though feelings (*vādana*) and perceptions (*saññā*) remain as usual. Only difference is that such a mind does not assimilate (*ūpādāna*) any object with *san* properties. In this whole process of *nirodha gāmini patipadā* as thought objects are not getting wheeled, the *āyathanika ratāva* is disrupted because the cognition, free of *san*, cannot trigger for example, the HPA axis or SAM endocrine systems. This means fight or flight (survival) response is coerced to fade away or gradually

deplete (atrophy) as excitements for mental objects are in decline. Now, the sense organs function as relatively independent organs (*indriya sanvaraya*) under the command of the central nervous system (*yonisomanasikāraya*) or in other words operate on the basis of causes and effects (*hetthū-pala*) after careful appraisal of the event or the situation. Such a mind is free of afflictions. What needs to be done is done (*karaneeya*) whereas what does not to be done (*akkaraneeya*) is willingly abandoned. With this transition all hormonal activities initiated by SAM and HPA axis etc., among others get transformed. Instead of excitements, calming down of the mind falls into place. For example, more endorphins are secreted into the blood stream instead of epinephrine, norepinephrine, and other hormones necessary for fight or flight or survival. From a *dhamma* perspective, this means that the usual systemic response pattern through the autonomic nervous system (*ayonisomanasikāraya*), which operates on *deeganva* (inherited *sangathi* from the past) mental objects is altered, deracinated, or dismantled. This leads to the total freedom from *san* associations in the mental sphere. This is freedom from afflictions.

Having eliminated systemic responses to emotions that generate afflictions or *dukkha* (*nāparan*), one comprehends reality (*parama sathya*) empirically. According to Buddha *dhamma* well-disciplined sense organs (*indriya dhamma*) such as eye (*chakkū indriya*), ear (*sotha indriya*), nose (*ghāna indriya*), tongue (*jivhā indriya*), body (*pottabbha indriya*) and mind (*manindriya*) cannot be manipulated by *san* (mental defilements). Within this framework these organs (*indriya*) are energized as *indriya bala* and do not fall into the trap of responding as a system supporting *samsāric* existence that has been brought to an end willingly. Here, one understands that the desire to feel (*assādo*) *vādanā* is the main (*mūla*) underlying reason for *ūpādāna* through the experience of *sankhāra ūpekkhā* mind set. With this state of mind one is convinced to terminate (*niroda*) *anūsaya* from being generated. With this

approach, one becomes skillful to grasp the true reality of existence and is able to comprehend its reality (*parama sathya*) penetratively. One gains the experiential knowledge that one's fabrication of existential afflictions was founded on own ignorant (*avijjā*) perception of *saṃ* as sumptuous (*samsāra*) and thus, one sets oneself free from perilous *samsāric drift* by ending all afflictions (*dukkha*), causes that lead to new afflictions and deracinating all roots leading to mental defilements (*kiḷaṣa*) in previous lives and this life (*tāna maṭṭhan vijjathī*). In the Buddha *dāsaṇā* this is recognized as the attainment of *sammā vimūṭṭhi* (*ithathāyāthī pajānāthī*). This is the state of boundless happiness and serenity devoid of afflictions which is expressed in the Buddha *dāsaṇā* as *Nibbānan paraman sūkhan*.

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